TWO IRON AGE SITES ON THE NEWPORT PAGNELL BY-PASS

MICHAEL FARLEY AND DAVID KNIGHT

An Iron Age occupation soil discovered during construction of the Newport Pagnell by-pass is described, along with the pottery it contained. Pollen analysis indicated a predominantly open landscape. A probable Iron Age enclosure and two other sites are also briefly described.

Construction work along the line of the Newport Pagnell by-pass in 1979 uncovered a Middle Saxon site and one or possibly two Iron Age sites. The Saxon site has been discussed elsewhere (Farley 1980), and attention is focused in this report upon a late Iron Age site at Tickfordfield Farm (Site A), and a possible Iron Age enclosure at Chicheley Hill (Site B). The first of these was discovered during roadside ditching at the junction of the by-pass with the North Crawley Road (SP 89484345; Figs. 1–3), and the second on the carriageway itself (SP 89614482). Circumstances permitted the excavation of only a small portion of each site, but parts of both remain undisturbed and hence are available for future investigation. Traces of two other sites are also noted.

Site records are stored in the Buckinghamshire County Museum, under CAS 4534 (Site A) and CAS 4569 (Site B). Finds from Sites A and B are accessioned as 542.1980 and 320.1980 respectively.

TICKFORDFIELD FARM (SITE A)

This site was situated at *c.*70 m O.D., on yellow boulder clay. It was located on approximately level ground, below an area of slightly rising ground to the south-east (Fig. 2).

The Features

The Layer of Dark Soil

Side ditches on either side of the realigned North Crawley road exposed a dark band of soil, *c.*200 mm thick and *c.*100–300 mm above the level of the standing water in the ditches (Fig. 3 and Pls. XI–XII), sealed for part of its length by up to 160 mm of sterile sandy gravel, overlain by modern ploughsoil, and elsewhere solely by ploughsoil. It graded into the underlying yellow clay throughout the exposure.

The soil had a crumbly clayey consistency, and preserved evidence of waterlogging. It incorporated a total of 171 mainly small and generally unabraded later Iron Age sherds, small charcoal fragments, and occasional burnt quartzite pebbles (contexts 109, 110, 111, 201, 300). 32 fragments of animal bone were also recovered, including 6 calcined pieces; most of these cannot be identified, but the collection includes cattle and sheep. Environmental sampling of the deposit was confined to a series of pollen samples from context 100 and from an apparently sterile area slightly east of context 105. The analyses of this material are reported below.

Pit and Ditches

One pit and two ditches were recorded in section (Fig. 3). All three features were filled with the dark clay described above.

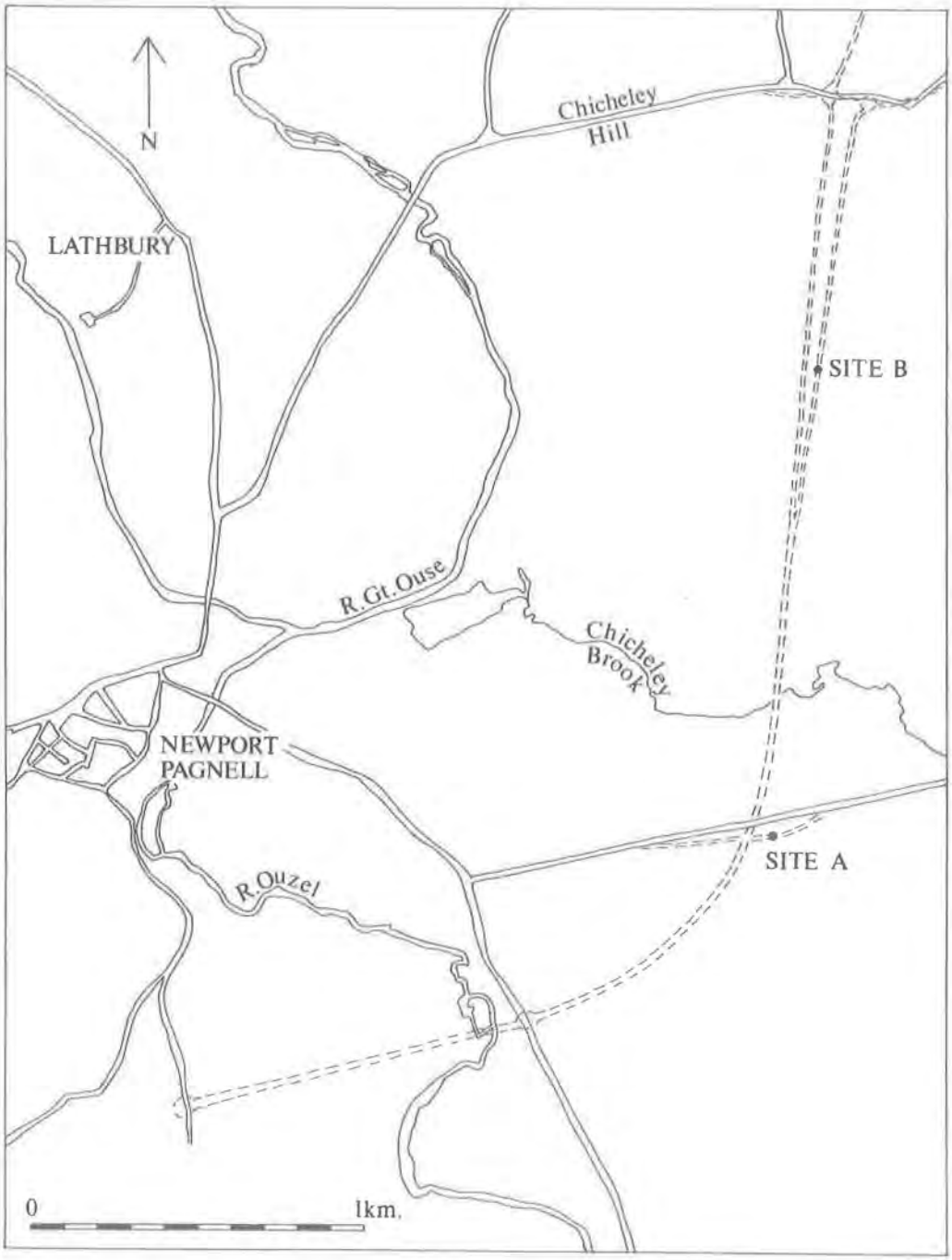

Fig. 1. Location of Iron Age sites A and B.

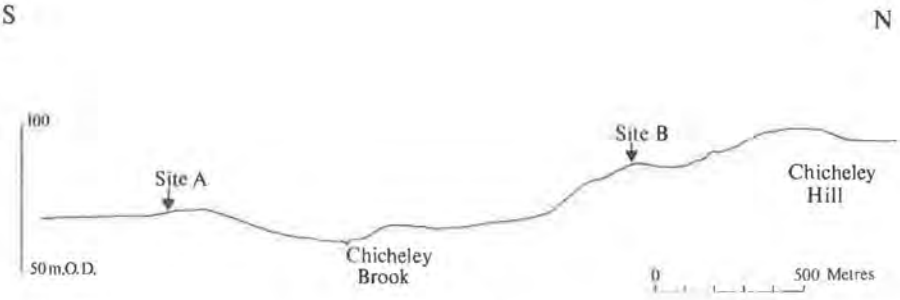

Fig. 2. Topographical location of sites A and B.

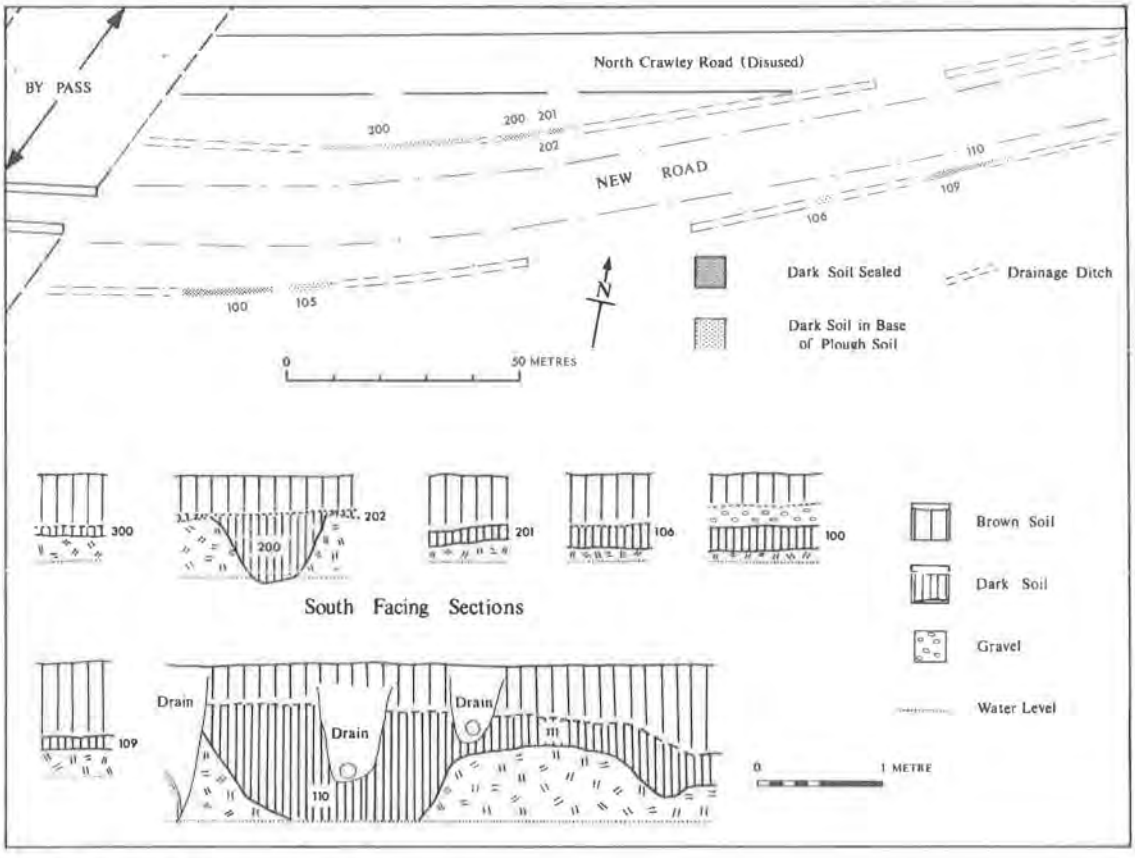

Fig. 3. Plan and sections of site A.

Pit 200:

Small pit, *c.*0.9 m wide at the mouth and surviving to a maximum depth of *c.*0.5 m, of inverted truncated triangle form (Knight 1984, i, 101–2: Form 2 pits).

Ditch 110:

U-sectioned ditch, *c.*2 m wide at the mouth and surviving to a maximum depth of 1.20 m, but below water at its base.

Ditch 111:

A slight ditch or gulley where fill was indistinguishable from the overlying dark soil.

Pit 200 and Ditch 110 produced 10 and 8 sherds respectively of later Iron Age pottery. In common with the remainder of the pottery from the site, these fragments were mainly small and unabraded.

Iron Age Pottery

171 sherds (1.027 kg) of hand-made Iron Age pottery were obtained from the layer of dark soil. This figure includes 8 from a ditch (110) and 10 from a pit (200; see Fig. 3). 3 other sherds deriving from hand-made Iron Age vessels were obtained from one of the excavation spoil-heaps (101).

The pottery was brushed extremely vigorously during washing, and its condition at the time of excavation may only rarely be ascertained. Most sherds, however, seem to have been recovered in an unabraded state, and hence are unlikely to have been exposed to the effects of weathering and erosion for a significant length of time. Sherds vary considerably in size, but most are fairly small (cf. Figs. 4 and 5). Very few sherds may be shown to join.

Vessel Forms

Two classes of vessel form may be distinguished.

1. Ovoid Vessels. One fragment, probably deriving from an ovoid jar with a short upright neck and a rounded rim, was obtained (Fig. 4.1). Several other fragments may derive from vessels of this kind (or possibly from globular or ellipsoid forms: e.g. Fig. 4.4, 6; cf. Knight 1984, i, figs. 3 and 7, 19–21). But none of these is large enough for this to be established beyond doubt.
2. Round-shouldered Vessels. Two girth fragments and part of a vessel with a pronounced rounded girth and a possibly upright neck (Fig. 4.11) derive from vessels of this kind (cf. *ibid.*, 19–21, fig. 6.5–8). One rim sherd may derive from a vessel with a high rounded girth (Fig. 4.2), but insufficient survives of the profile for this to be demonstrated with certainty.

Round-shouldered vessels may be recognized quite easily from small body sherds (e.g. *ibid.*, 9, 11) and hence vessels of this kind may genuinely have been comparatively rare. Ovoid vessels, by contrast (along with other Iron Age ceramic forms which lack a pronounced girth: e.g. *ibid.*, 19, fig. 7, Form Classes 4–7), are difficult to identify on the basis of small fragments, and the low proportion of recognizable examples may quite possibly be a function of survival.

Rims survive on a maximum of nine vessels; all are illustrated in Fig. 4. Five types may be identified on the basis of subtle variations in profile.

1. Rounded direct rims (five examples; e.g. Fig. 4.1).
2. Flat-topped rim, slightly pinched out externally (one example; Fig. 4.2).
3. Internally bevelled rim (one example; Fig. 4.3).
4. Rim with rounded lip, rolled over externally (one example; Fig. 4.9).
5. As 4, but with external bevel (one example; Fig. 4.14).

Attention ought to be drawn finally to the discovery of two base angles from vessels with flat bases, pinched out at the edge (e.g. Fig. 4.10), and part of a strap handle (Fig. 4.12). None of these derives from a vessel of known profile.

Surface Treatment

Decoration is confined to a row of irregularly spaced and poorly executed finger-nail incisions along the lip of a probably ovoid vessel (Fig. 4.1) and on the lips of two pots of uncertain

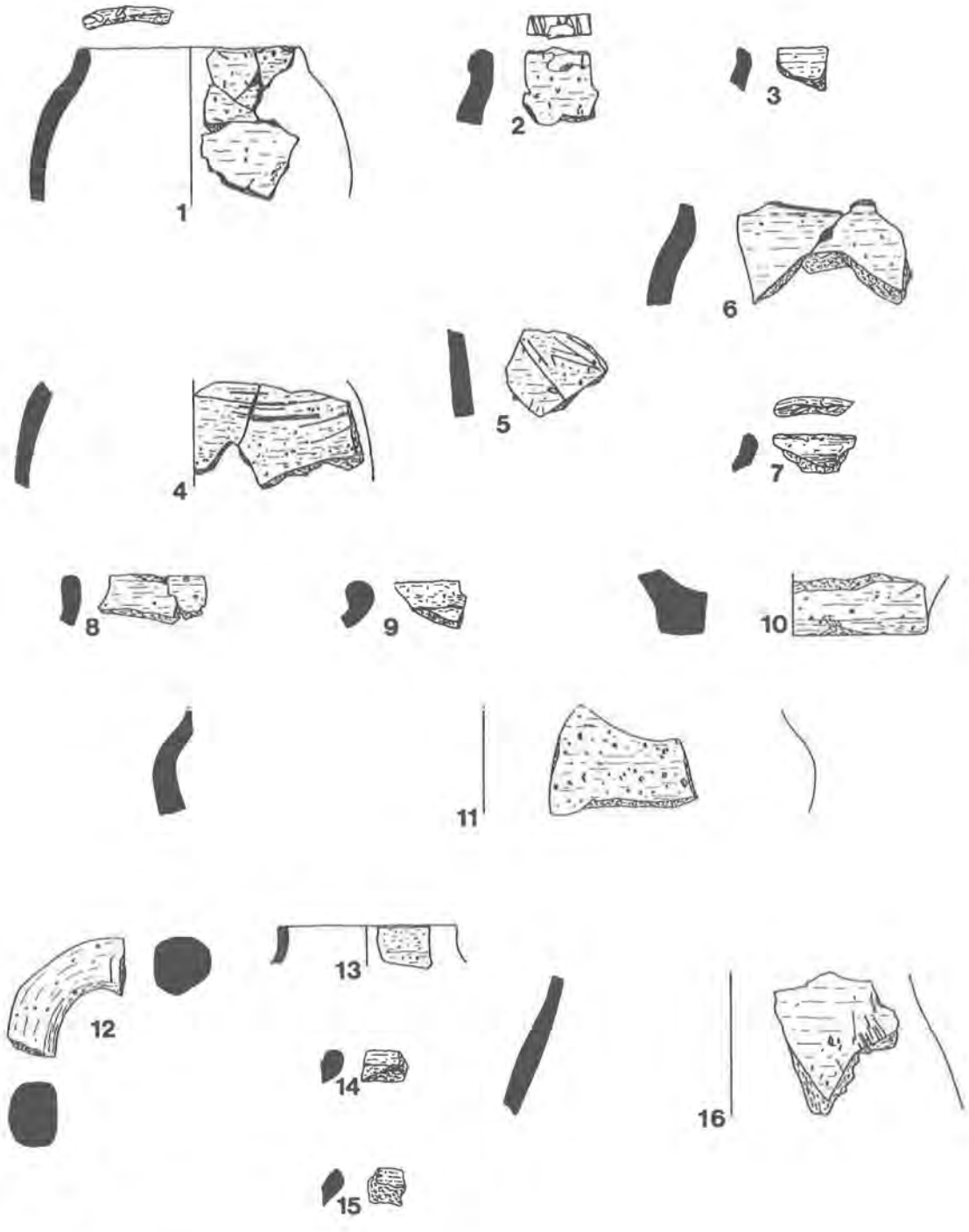

Fig. 4. Pottery from site A (scale 1:3).

form (Fig. 4.2, 7). The outer surfaces of vessels occasionally preserve traces of burnishing or of light brushing (e.g. with a bundle of twigs: Fig. 4.4, 5, 16).

Vessel Fabrics

Four main fabric groups may be distinguished on the basis of variations in the kinds of inclusion which are visible within the clay matrix (magnification × 20). These are described below, employing, where relevant, the descriptive terminology devised by the Soil Survey (Hodgson (ed.) 1974).

Fabric 1:

Fabric 1 is characterized by a moderate density (*c.*2–20%) of quartz sand, commonly mixed with smaller proportions of other sand minerals (notably white mica and quartzite). The quartz inclusions are generally fine (under 0.2 mm) or medium (0.2–0.6 mm), and are mainly rounded or sub-rounded. They are commonly associated with sparse (under *c.*2%) medium or fine rounded ironstone inclusions, and with occasional fragments of the following (generally under *c.*1%):

1. Limestone: see description of Fabric 4 (but including fragments up to *c.*4 mm in diameter).
2. Silty mudstone: see description of Fabric 2.
3. Flint: coarse angular fragments, mainly between 1 and 6 mm in diameter. The calcareous inclusions are occasionally leached out. Blade-like voids suggestive of burnt-out grass or straw, and seed impressions, may sometimes also be observed.

Sherds deriving from Fabric 1 vessels are soft or occasionally hard (Peacock 1977, 30), possess rough or sometimes smooth surfaces, and have a hackly fracture.

Fabric 2:

Fabric 2 also contains a moderate density of quartz (as above, generally fine or medium, and mainly rounded or sub-rounded), associated with variable but significantly smaller proportions of other sand minerals (mainly white mica and quartzite). Unlike Fabric 1, however, a moderate density (*c.*2–20%) of generally well-sorted silty mudstone inclusions is also in evidence. These invite superficial comparison with grog fragments (i.e. crushed pottery), but unlike grog they are generally rounded or sub-rounded; most are medium (0.2–0.6 mm) or coarse (0.6–2 mm). The above categories of inclusion are occasionally associated with sparse (under *c.*1%) fragments of coarse angular flint and/or limestone (see below). Voids suggestive of leached-out calcareous inclusions or of grass or straw and seed impressions may also sometimes be observed.

The fabric is generally soft, and compares closely with Fabric 1 in terms of its texture and fracture.

Fabric 3:

This resembles Fabric 2 in all but one major respect, namely that quartz and other sand minerals are either rare (under *c.*2%) or absent.

There is a considerable overlap between Fabrics 1, 2 and 3, but although sherds of these groups are not always easily separated, the type examples of each group are sufficiently distinctive to justify this division.

Fabric 4:

This is distinguished from Fabrics 1–3 by the presence within the clay matrix of moderate limestone inclusions (and voids suggestive of leached-out limestone fragments). These are generally well sorted, may be up to *c.*2 mm in diameter, and are either angular or sub-angular. They occur in association with mainly moderate quartz and other sand minerals and silty mudstone (as described above). Angular flint fragments and rounded ironstone inclusions, of a similar size range to those occurring in the other fabric groups, may occasionally be observed (under *c.*2%).

Colour

Fabric 4 sherds are invariably dark grey throughout, and hence were presumably fired in a reducing atmosphere. Other sherds generally have grey or black cores, but the colour of the outer surface varies considerably (mainly black, dark or light grey, dark or light brown, or occasionally orange). The surfaces of

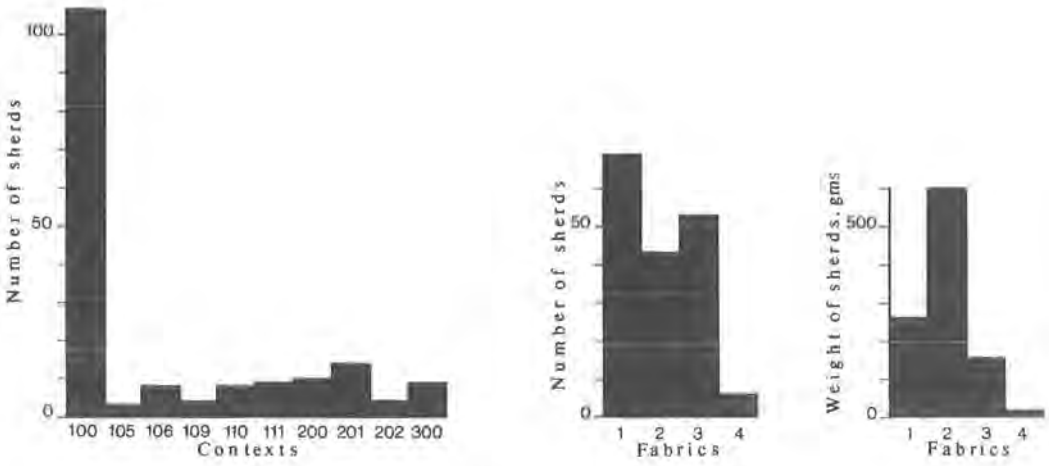

Fig. 5. Pottery from site A by Context/Fabric.

Fabric 1–3 sherds are commonly mottled, suggesting poor control over the firing operation (presumably in a bonfire).

Relative Proportions of Fabric Groups

Fabric 4 is represented by only six sherds (14.3 g). The other fabric groups are represented by significantly larger quantities of pottery, in the proportions shown in Fig. 5.

Sources of Raw Materials

All of the inclusions visible within the clay matrix may be obtained from clay sources near the site (e.g. from the abundant local boulder clays and Oxford/Kimmeridge clays). Hence, although doubts must be expressed regarding the exact source or sources of the clay, there is no evidence to suggest that raw materials or finished products were transported over long distances.

Typological Affinities and Dating

Discussion of these issues is complicated by the small size of the collection, and by the paucity of both ornament and recognizable vessel forms. The closest affinities of the pottery, however, seem to lie with ceramic assemblages which in this region are diagnostic mainly of the later pre-'Belgic' Iron Age (see Knight 1984, i, 39–99 'Group 2' ceramic assemblages; e.g. Ravenstone, Bucks: Mynard 1970, 401, fig. 5; Knight 1984, i, 61). If this is correct, and if it is accepted that the pottery was not exposed for a considerable length of time before burial (p. 151 above), a date of deposition between the fifth and later first centuries BC may be proposed.

Features of this collection which suggest an affinity with assemblages dating mainly from the fifth to first centuries BC are (1) the possible emphasis upon forms which lack a pronounced girth, and (2) the paucity of decoration, which where it does occur is restricted to a row of finger-nail incisions along the lip (Knight 1984, i, 40–99). The absence of 'Belgic' pottery types (e.g. Birchall 1965; Thompson 1982) and of the restricted range of vessel forms and styles of surface treatment diagnostic of later Late Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age ceramic assemblages in this region (e.g. Barrett 1980; Knight 1984, 'Group 1' vessels) support this view.

Catalogue of Illustrated Pottery

Context numbers are in parentheses. F = Fabric.

1. Two rims and three body sherds deriving from probably ovoid vessel, with short upright neck and rounded direct rim. Several crudely executed finger-nail incisions along lip. F2. (100)
2. Rim of round-shouldered(?) vessel; flat-topped rim, slightly pinched out externally. Several crudely executed finger-nail incisions along lip. F1. (100)
3. Internally bevelled rim. F1. (100)
4. Two body sherds from vessel of uncertain form,

showing light horizontal brushing of the outer surface. F1. (100)
5. Body sherd with light 'random' brushing on the outer surface. F2. (100)
6. Two bodysherds from necked vessel of uncertain form (ovoid?). F2. (100)
7. Rounded direct rim, with two crude finger-nail incisions on lip. F2. (100)
8. Two rim sherds from vessel of uncertain form; rounded direct rim. F2. (100)
9. Rolled-over rim. Traces of burnishing on outer face. F1. (109)
10. Base angle from flat-based vessel; base pinched-out at edge. F2. (109)
11. Girth fragment, from round-shouldered vessel of uncertain form. F1. (110, ditch)
12. Fragment of strap handle. F2. (110, ditch)
13. Rounded direct rim, from upright-necked(?) vessel of uncertain form. Diameter uncertain. F2. (110, ditch)
14. Rim sherd, rolled over externally with slight external bevel. F4. (111)
15. Rounded direct rim. F4. (200, pit)
16. Body sherd from vessel of uncertain form (ovoid?). Faint brush marks on exterior. F2. (201)

Pollen Analysis
by G. Coles

Introduction

This report is a summary of a detailed study; a full version is housed at Buckinghamshire County Museum. Analysis was restricted to 9 samples from context 100 (Fig. 6), deriving from a column cutting the underlying 'yellow clay' (samples 4 and 8), the buried 'dark soil' (samples 12, 16, 20, 24 and 28), and the overlying 'sandy gravel' (samples 32 and 36). The samples had been taken at 4 cm intervals, by pushing glass sample-containers into the section. Each sample was *c.*10 ml in volume.

Palynological Methods

The samples were processed by the methods given in Hunt 1985. This involved the disaggregation of the sediment in Potassium Hydroxide, repeated sieving on a 7-micron sieve to remove clays, and swirling on a clock glass to remove silts and sands. The samples were mounted in glycerine jelly. The entire residue of each sample was scanned.

Palynological Results

The results are given in tables 1–9 (in archive) and as a pollen diagram (Fig. 7), following the conventions outlined in Dimbleby (1985). The pollen diagram shows the total number of grains of a given taxa to the left of the species centre line, and the percentage frequency of that species to the right of this line. The pollen sum is based on the total incidence of land pollen and spores (ΣTLPS), excluding degraded (unidentifiable) grains.

Interpretation of the pollen and spore assemblages derived from the site at Tickfordfield Farm raises several problems. First, the size of the sediment sample from which the pollen and spores was extracted was relatively small: *c.*10 ml, as opposed to the 40 ml or more that is usually considered adequate when dealing with minerogenic sediments (cf. Dimbleby 1985). As a result, the total numbers of pollen and spores recovered were generally low. Second, the volume of sediment within each sample tube was variable, and in consequence the actual incidence of a given taxa within the pollen diagram must be taken as only the approximate equal of the pollen concentration per 10 ml.

Given these limitations the pollen diagram from Tickfordfield Farm may be divided into three Local Pollen Assemblage Zones (LPAZ). Starting at the base of the sample column these were:

LPAZ One:

Gramineae-Filicales-Herb. Samples 4 and 8. This zone is characterized by high incidence of *Gramineae* (Grasses), *Filicales* (Ferns, undifferentiated) and herbs. The assemblages from LPAZ One have taken fuchsin stain very poorly. Havinga (1967, 1971) notes that pollen and spore assemblages that have undergone prolonged weathering generally show poor uptake of organic stains such as fuchsin. The preservation state of the LPAZ One assemblages is also poor, and would further suggest that the assemblages have undergone weathering.

It is unlikely that the assemblage represents a Holocene flora since there is a total absence of thermophilous arboreal taxa. Many of these are resistant to weathering and should, therefore, have survived prolonged exposure.

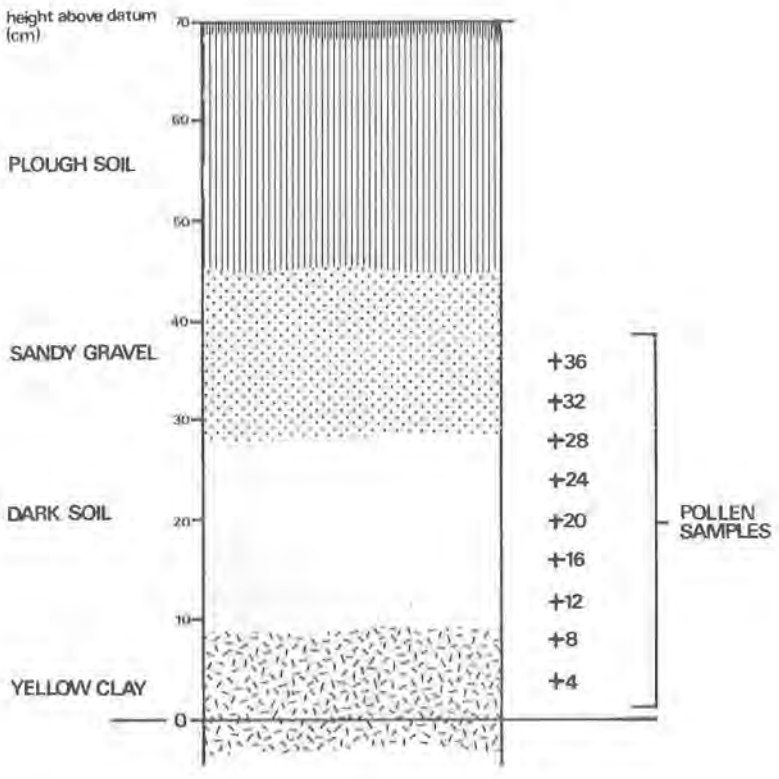

Fig. 6. Location of pollen samples, site A.

LPAZ One is confined to the 'yellow clay' and may represent a somewhat weathered late glacial flora: Godwin Zones I, II and III (Godwin 1975). Further interpretation is precluded by the small sample size and the low pollen concentration.

LPAZ Two:

Gramineae-Pteridium-Arboreal. Samples 12, 16, 20, 24, 28. This zone is characterized by high incidences of *Gramineae*, gradually increasing incidences of *Pteridium* (Bracken) and decreasing incidences of *Filicales*.

The zone contains relatively abundant thermophilous arboreal taxa, including *Carpinus* (Hornbeam), *Tilia* (Lime) and *Ulmus* (Elm). The incidence of arboreal taxa suggests limited areas of deciduous woodland of variable composition. The presence of *Betula* (Birch) and Coryloid (probably *Corylus*, Hazel) suggests local areas of secondary (regenerating) woodland.

The herb assemblage from this zone is varied. Herbs indicating disturbed open ground ('agricultural weeds') tend to prevail when Cereal type *Gramineae* is most strongly represented. Such herbs include *Cannabis* type (Hemp), *Plantago lanceolata* (Sheep's Sorrel) and members of the *Chenopodiaceae*.

The abundance of Cereal type *Gramineae* suggests that Cereals were being grown locally, but the presence of substantial numbers of open ground and damp open ground herb taxa, together with substantial incidences of *Gramineae*, also suggests the presence of areas of open grassland. The presence of *Urtica* (Nettle) pollen suggests phosphate enrichment of the local soils by livestock, while the increasing representation of *Pteridium* through the zone

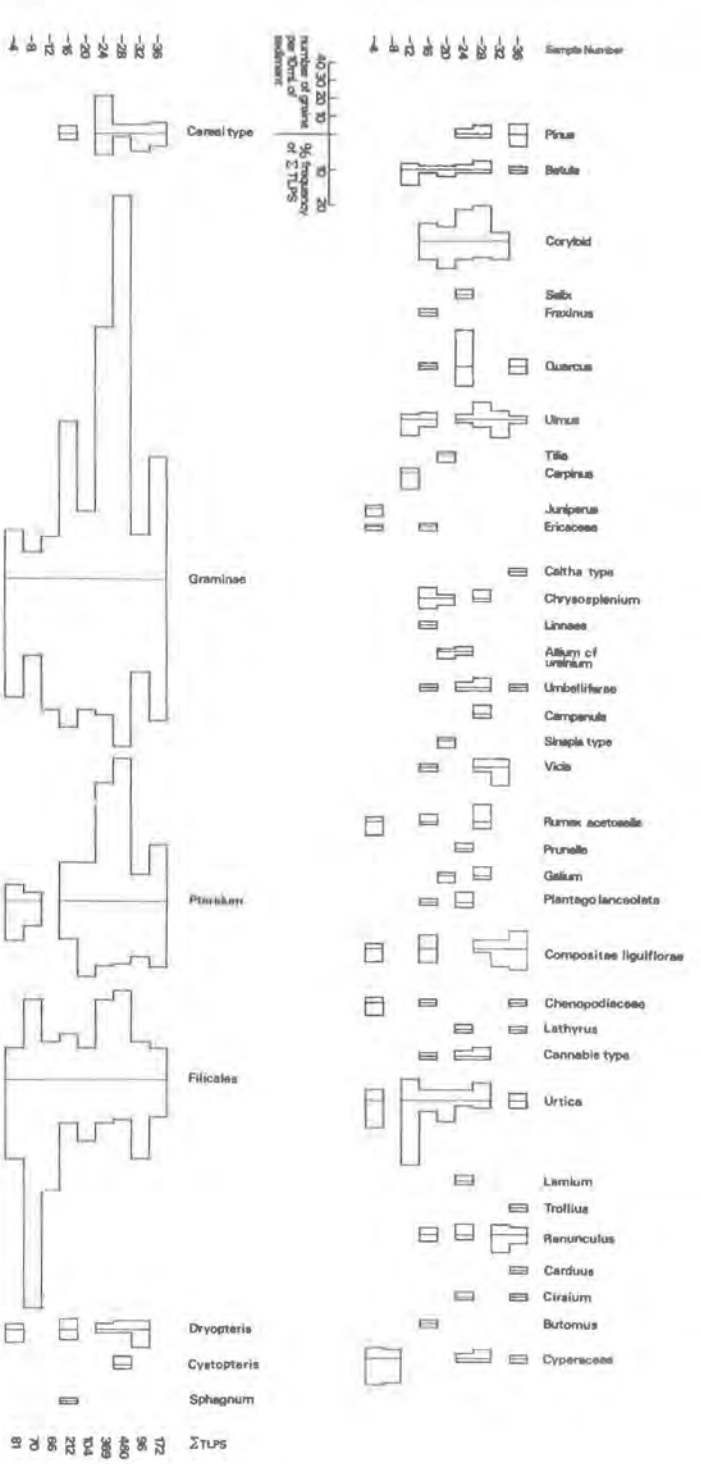

Fig. 7. Pollen count, site A.

may conceivably have resulted from over-grazing.

The record of *Lathyrus* (cf. *palustris*) ('Marsh Pea'), *Ranunculus* (Buttercups) and low incidences of *Cyperaceae* (Sedges) suggests the presence locally of areas of damp to very damp open ground.

During the time the zone was formed there appears to have been a local and gradual shift away from arable (cereal) farming towards greater use of the immediate surrounding area as pasture. The number and incidences of disturbed open ground herbs decrease, while there is a corresponding increase in the presence of open ground and damp open ground taxa.

LPAZ Three:
Gramineae-Pteridium-Herb. Samples 32, 36. The zone is characterized by high incidences of *Gramineae* and *Pteridium*, with *Filicales* forming an important subsidiary element.

The zone has broadly the same proportion of arboreal taxa as the previous zone, although Coryloid is absent and increased incidences of *Pinus* (Pine) are noted.

The zone sees an increase in the percentage frequency of Cereal type *Gramineae*. This, together with the presence of several 'weeds of cultivation' (disturbed open ground herb taxa), suggests a local increase in Cereal cultivation. This is mirrored by a decrease in the incidence of Grasses and by the absence of typical grassland herbs, suggesting that local pasture land had been taken into arable cultivation.

Further interpretation of this zone is somewhat limited by the paucity of the samples.

The presence of *Tilia*, *Ulmus* and *Carpinus*, together with the very open (and man modified) nature of the vegetation landscape, places LPAZ Two and LPAZ Three in the later Holocene, specifically in Godwin Zone VIII.

Conclusions
The 'yellow clay' at the base of the section yielded pollen spectra that may be interpreted as late glacial. The pollen assemblages from the 'yellow clay' have staining and preservation characteristics very different from those found in the overlying units, suggesting that they are of a different age and origin. On this basis it is suggested that there is an unconformity in the section between the Yellow Clay (samples 4, 8) and the overlying 'dark soil' (samples 12–28).

The assemblage from the 'dark soil' (the buried soil horizon) would appear to be *in situ*, since there is no consistent trend that could be interpreted as downwashing from overlying sediments. The upper samples from the buried soil are weathered, and there is a clear disjunction in the pollen profile at the point where the sediment facies changes to the overlying sandy gravel. It would appear, therefore, that the pollen profile from the buried soil (LPAZ Two) is broadly contemporary with the formation of that unit. The pollen spectra are in agreement with a later Iron Age date for this event, as proposed on archaeological grounds.

The pollen profile from the 'dark soil' suggests that the local landscape during the later Iron Age was an essentially open one, with restricted areas of somewhat scrubby (probably secondary) deciduous woodland. The economy of the area would appear to have been based on mixed arable/pastoral agriculture. Limited evidence suggests that in the area around the pollen sample site there was an increase in pastoral activity during the latter part of the LPAZ Two, locally at the expense of cereal cultivation (as witnessed by the reduction in the incidence of disturbed ground taxa). However, the continued presence of Cereal type pollen suggests that arable agriculture was still being carried out within the pollen catchment area.

The sandy gravels overlying the buried soil contain a sparse pollen assemblage. The pollen profile indicates that the pollen concentration decreases towards the base of the unit, suggesting that pollen has been downwashed into the sandy gravel. Given the coarse nature of the sediment, this would appear probable.

The pollen spectra from the sandy gravels indicate an open landscape, with the presence

Plate XI. Newport Pagnell Iron Age site. Southern roadside ditch looking east.

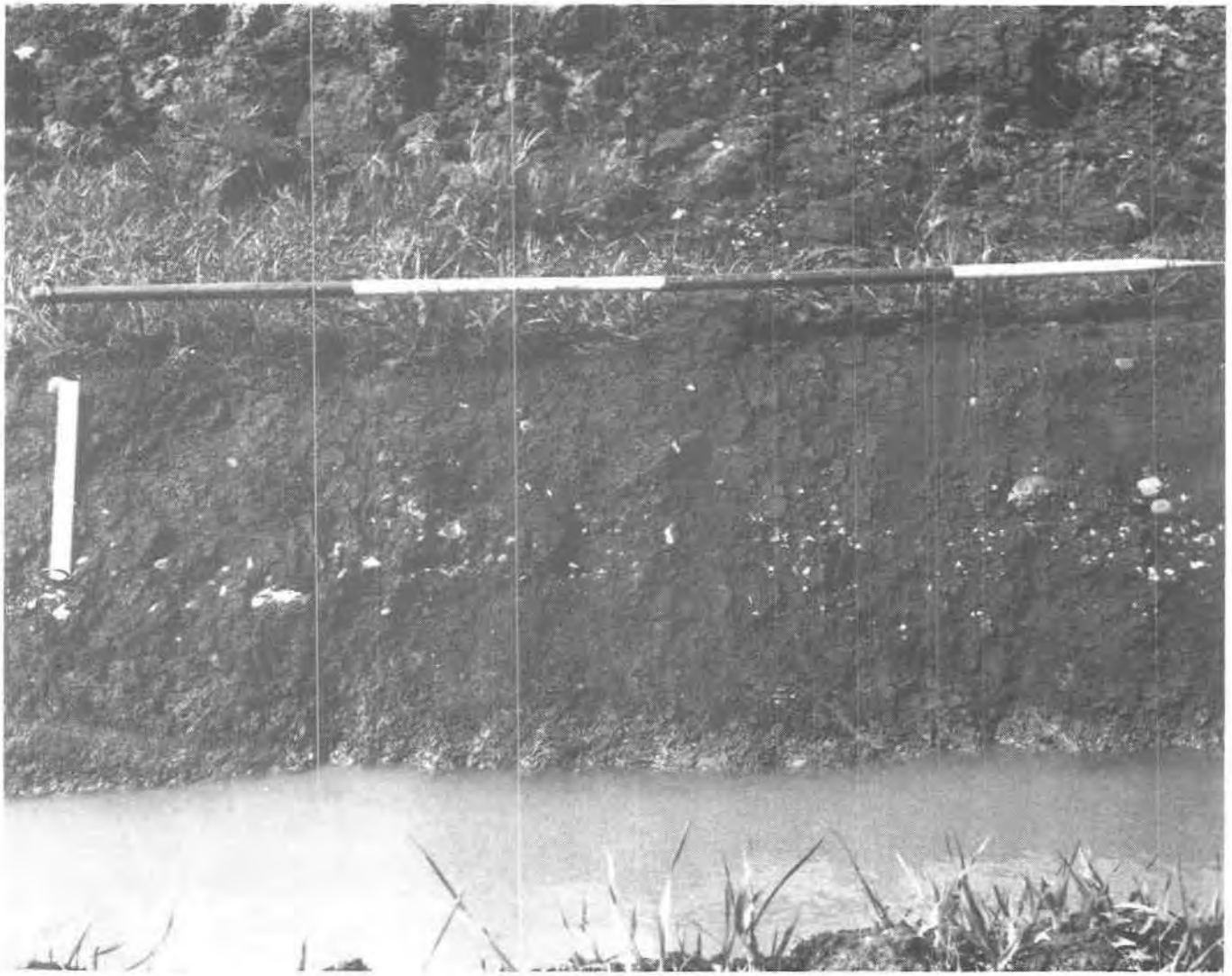

Plate XII. Newport Pagnell. Dark soil containing Iron Age pottery, beneath gravel.

of small areas of woodland. Agricultural activity is indicated by Cereal type *Gramineae*, together with extensive records of disturbed open ground taxa. The absence of open ground (Grassland) herb species suggests that, at least in the local area, arable agriculture was the dominant activity at some time after the deposition of the sandy gravels.

Site A: Summary and Conclusions

Traces survived on Site A of what may be interpreted as a later Iron Age occupation level, comprising a layer of dark soil, *c.*200 mm thick, associated with a collection of later Iron Age pottery, charcoal, burnt quartzite pebbles, and burnt or unburnt animal bone. Structural evidence for settlement activity is provided by a pit and two ditches, filled with dark soil, and in two cases containing small quantities of later Iron Age pottery.

The layer of sandy gravel which partially sealed the Iron Age horizon may have accumulated as a result of the downslope movement of soil from an area of higher land to the south-east, possibly as a result of Romano-British or later ploughing.

Analysis of the pollen contained within the layer of dark soil produced a rare insight into the later Iron Age vegetation of this region. A predominantly open landscape is indicated in the immediate neighbourhood of the site, with limited areas of scrubby and probably secondary deciduous woodland. A mixed agricultural economy is suggested, possibly with an increase over time in the relative importance of animal husbandry (cf. Knight 1984, i, 257).

CHICHELEY HILL (SITE B)

This site occupied a broad natural terrace just below the crest of Chicheley Hill, on chalky boulder clay, at about 83 m O.D. (Figs. 1 & 2). Topsoil stripping revealed part of a ditch, visible initially as a dark stain within the boulder clay. One complete length of ditch, *c.*50 m long and aligned approximately north-south, and parts of two ditches at right angles to the terminals of this feature, were eventually uncovered (Fig. 8). The two east–west ditches appear to have formed the northern and southern boundaries of an enclosure whose eastern edge lay to the east of the stripped area, but further excavation would be required to establish this with certainty. The terminals of the main north–south ditch were inturned slightly eastwards, and were separated from the ends of the other ditches by causeways *c.*1 m wide. The whole probably formed a rectilinear enclosure with at least two corner entrances, of a type such as was recorded, for example, during the excavation of an extensive Iron Age settlement at Cat's Water, Fengate, Cambs. (Pryor 1984, fig. 18; also Knight 1984, i, 221).

The clay soil had been firmly compacted by machinery, and only one complete section could be cut in the time available. This revealed a substantial U-shaped ditch, *c.*2 m wide at the mouth, and surviving to a depth of *c.*0.86 m (Fig. 8). The ditch narrowed to *c.*1.5 m to the south of this section, but two partially completed sections showed it to be at least as deep in this area. The ditch was filled with an intractable grey-brown chalky clay, comparable to the underlying boulder clay but with a silty component. No internal stratification could be discerned, and it is possible that the feature was deliberately backfilled.

Several pieces of animal bone, two pieces of cut antler, a collection of snails and a small amount of charcoal were recovered from the lower and middle fills of the ditch. 18 sherds of pottery were obtained from the upper fill of the feature, and from machine-disturbed soil adjacent to it. This small collection includes nine Romano-British sherds and ten small black or dark grey plain body sherds in a hard or very hard rough sandy fabric which could be either Iron Age or Saxon.

It seems unlikely, by comparison with known Romano-British enclosures in this area, that so

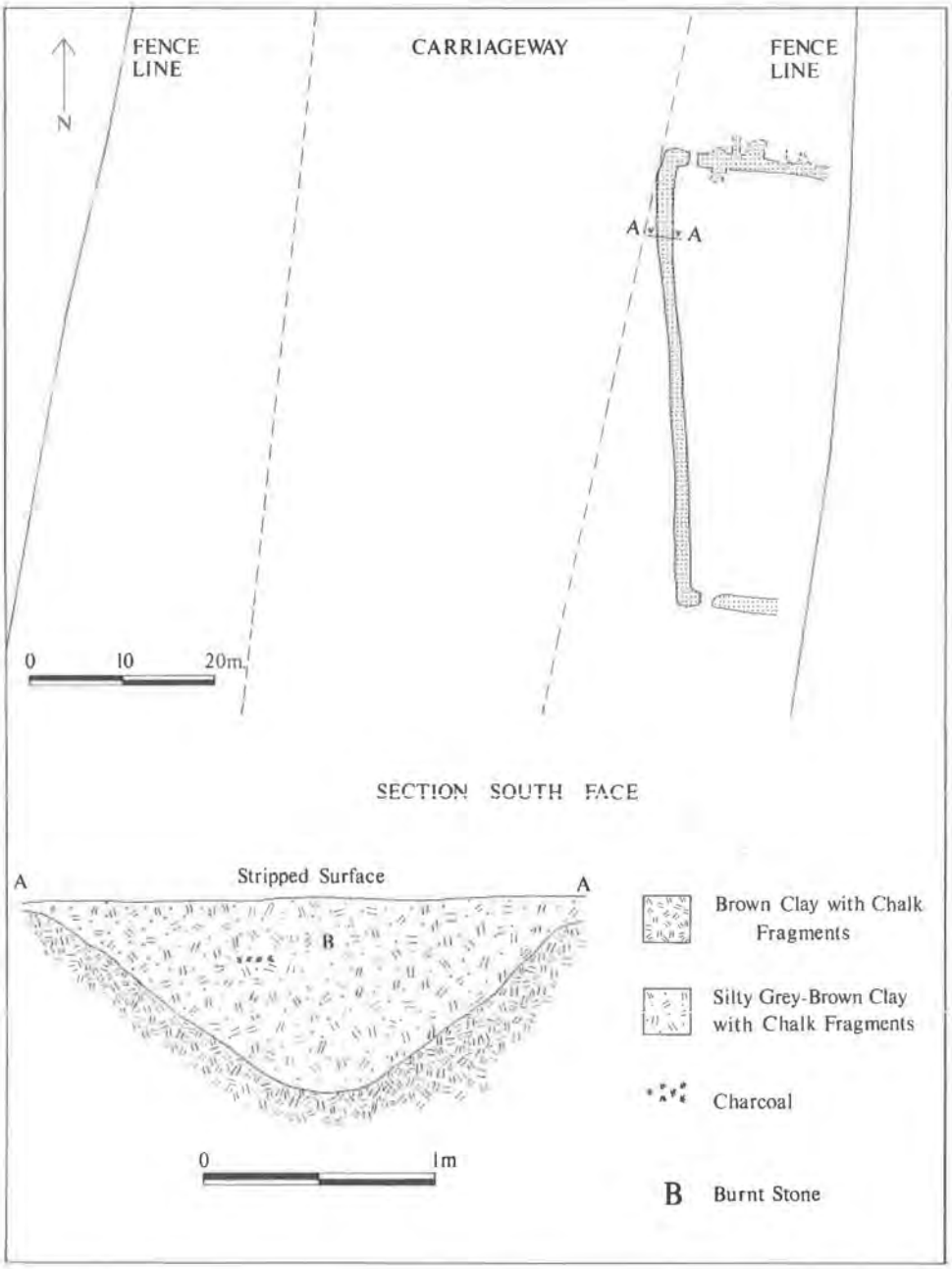

Fig. 8. Plan and section of site B.

few finds would have survived if the site were attributable to this period, and given its strong typological affinities with later Iron Age (La Tène 1–3) enclosures elsewhere in north Buckinghamshire an Iron Age origin is perhaps more likely (see, for example, Knight 1984, i, 190–239). Notable parallels include two enclosures at Pennyland, Milton Keynes (*ibid.*, fig. 64 and Williams 1980), and enclosures at Hartigan's Gravel Pit, Milton Keynes (*ibid.*, fig. 61) and Ravenstone, Bucks (Mynard 1970). The corner entrances are of particular interest. These invite comparison with a wide range of first millennium BC enclosures from southern England generally, and as has been argued elsewhere may provide evidence for the herding of stock (e.g. Bradley 1978, 48; Knight 1984, i, 221). It is possible, given the apparent absence of internal features, that the site served as a specialized stock corral. But as the circumstances of excavation prevented a thorough investigation of the areas around the ditches, the absence of internal features is not necessarily of significance.

OTHER SITES

Two other discoveries were made to the north of Site B.

1. Traces of a slight east–west ditch were recorded at SP 8967 4531 (CAS 4571), after topsoil stripping of the carriageway. Nine probably Iron Age sherds were recovered from its fill. The fabrics of these sherds compare most closely with pottery from elsewhere in north Buckinghamshire which has been dated mainly to the later pre-'Belgic' Iron Age (Knight 1984, i, Ch. 1.3: 1A2 ceramic assemblages), but none may be dated closely. They comprise eight plain body sherds and part of a rim from a vessel of uncertain form. The latter possesses a short, possibly upright neck and a rounded direct rim; the profile cannot be reconstructed with certainty, but an ovoid or possibly even globular or ellipsoid form seems most likely (*ibid.*, figs. 6–7: forms 3–5).
2. Another east–west ditch, *c.*1.2 m deep, was observed in a new road ditch at SP 8971 4548 (CAS 4570). The feature produced only three struck flints, and its date must remain in doubt.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement has previously been made to a number of people who helped with the Chicheley Middle Saxon site (Farley 1980), and many of these were also involved in work on the two sites reported here. Thanks are also due to Geraint Coles for providing a report on the pollen from Site A, and Barbara Hurman, Trevor Pearson and Grace Scrimgeour for preparing the illustrations. Dr C. O. Hunt critically reviewed an earlier draft of the pollen report, and assisted in the identification of the inclusions within the Iron Age pottery. Funding for the watching brief was in part provided by the D.o.E (Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments).

The Society gratefully acknowledges a grant from English Heritage towards the cost of publishing this paper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barrett, J. C. 1980. 'The pottery of the Later Bronze Age in Lowland England', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* **46**, 297–319.

Birchall, A. 1965. 'The Aylesford–Swarling culture: the problem of the Belgae reconsidered', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* **31**, 241–367.

Bradley, R. 1978. *The Prehistoric Settlement of Britain* (London, RKP).

Catherall, P. D., Barnett, M. and McLean, H. (eds.) 1984. *The Southern Feeder* (British Gas Corp.).

Dimbleby, G. W. 1985. *The Palynology of Archaeological Sites* (London, Academic Press).

Farley, M. E. 1980. 'Middle Saxon occupation at Chicheley, Bucks.', *Recs. Bucks* **22**, 92–104.

Godwin, H. 1975. *History of the British Flora* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Havinga, A. J. 1967. 'Palynology and pollen preservation', *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* **2**, 81–98.

Havinga, A. J. 1971. 'An experimental investigation into the decay of pollen and spores in various soil types', *in* Brooks, V. *et al.*, *Sporopollenin* (London, Academic Press).

Hodgson, J. M. (ed.) 1974. *Soil Survey Field Handbook* (Harpenden).

Hunt, C. O. 1985. 'Recent advances in pollen preparation techniques', *in* Gibertson, D. D., Fieller, N. and Ralph, N., *Palaeoenvironmental Investigations* (Oxford, BAR International Series **266**).

Knight, D. 1984. *Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Settlement in the Nene and Great Ouse Basins* (Oxford, BAR British Series **130**).

Mynard, D. C. 1970. 'An Iron Age enclosure at Ravenstone, Bucks.', *Recs. Bucks* **18**, 393–413.

Peacock, D. P. S. 1977. 'Ceramics in Roman and Medieval archaeology', *in* Peacock, D. P. S., *Pottery and Early Commerce* (London, Academic Press).

Pinder, A. 1986. 'Excavations at Willington 1984', *Beds. Archaeology* **17**, 15–40.

Pryor, F. M. 1984. *Excavation at Fengate, Peterborough, England: the fourth report* (Northants. Arch. Soc. Monog. **2** and Royal Ontario Museum Monog. **7**).

Thompson, I. 1982. *Grog-tempered 'Belgic' Pottery of South-eastern England* (Oxford, BAR British Series **108**).

Waugh, H., Mynard, D. C. and Cain, R. 1974. 'Some Iron Age pottery from Mid and North Bucks. . . .', *Recs. Bucks* **19**, 373–419.

Williams, R. J. 1980. 'Pennyland Iron Age/Saxon site', CBA 9 *Newsletter* **10**, 64–73.